

---

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

---

Property Address:	<b>300-308 Carroll Street, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Takoma Park</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>April 30, 2020</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>19-549</b>	<b>X</b>	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
			Demolition
		<b>X</b>	Subdivision

---

SGA Cos. LLC, represented by developer/architect Sassan Gharai, seeks on-going conceptual design review for construction of a five-story plus penthouse apartment building in the Takoma Park Historic District.

The property includes three parcels in Square 3354 – lots 4 and 5 facing Carroll Street, and lot 24 facing Vine Street. The two Carroll lots each have a brick detached house sitting at the top of the hill. 300 Carroll was built in 1898; 308 Carroll dates from 1906 and has a row of three one-story commercial buildings added to its front at street level in 1928. The houses and the commercial buildings date from the period of significance for the Takoma Park Historic District (1862-1948).

When the Board reviewed the project in January, it found the height of the new building to be compatible for this location in the historic district, but that the massing needed to be further broken down, with greater separation and stepping down of height behind the historic houses. The Board asked that a more consistent design vocabulary that relates to the historic district be developed across all elevations of the building, and that the necessity of removing the original projecting storefront windows on the one-story 1928 buildings should be further evaluated.

**Revised Proposal**

The massing changes include lowering the height of the connections between the apartment building and the backs of the houses to two stories so that they fall below the existing roof eaves of each house. The mass of the top floor facing Carroll has been broken down with setbacks on each side, and the penthouse has been further set back to ensure that it will not be seen as part of the primary elevation. A garden courtyard between the houses has been developed, leading to a prominent recessed entrance portico. The vocabulary of the building has been developed with a board-and-batten siding with projections.

As before, the houses would be rehabilitated with new front porches based on historic photographs. The original projecting storefront windows on the 1920s buildings would be retained and utility poles relocated to provide a wider pedestrian clearance for the public sidewalk.

**Evaluation**

The revisions to the massing, the lowered connections to the backs of the houses, and the more regularized design across the new elevations of the new construction all improve the compatibility of the design. The refinements to the conceptual treatment of the existing buildings -- porch designs, retention of the projecting storefronts, retaining more of the grade of the hillside -- are also preservation benefits.

While board and batten siding is an unorthodox choice for a large apartment building, it could be seen as relating to the widespread use of painted wood siding that is prevalent in the residential portions of the historic district. The architect has studied a variety of options for the Carroll Street elevation, particularly the portion that will be seen between the two houses, and has developed an option with a three-story oriel bay above a masonry-enframed entrance element. The proposed solution breaks both the façade plane and the roofline of the building on this elevation so that the building doesn't appear as a single looming mass behind the houses, while also providing a smaller scaled element that relates to the residential character of the flanking houses.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board find the revisions made for historic building rehabilitation and the new construction to be improvements that enhance the project's compatibility with the character of the Takoma Park Historic District.*